

BODIES

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PRESENTED

by

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on

*The  
Back to God  
Hour*

THE DENOMINATIONAL BROADCAST OF  
THE REFORMED CHURCHES  
OF  
Australia and New Zealand



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## BODIES

... *The body is... meant... for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.* Corinthians 6: 13

I'm always surprised at what a quarter will buy in some of the family magazines. I can pick up in a supermarket every day. The recipes are extremely imaginative and I usually benefit whenever my wife experiments with one of them. Some of the ideas for remodeling and redecorating are extremely useful, too. If a person is interested in interior design and embroidery, there's a lot that is worth while as well. And among all of this, one will find advertisements for courses and preparations that will help a person ... excuse me for bringing this up . . . that will help a person increase her bustline.

There are magazines, of course, that devote themselves to this kind of thing, but it always strikes me as rather out of place, amid all the wholesome articles and ads for toothpick holders and needlecraft kits, to run across a rather young woman who joyfully announces that she has dramatically altered her measurements in just eight weeks. And there is a picture there to prove that her assertion is not wholly imaginary. There is something gross and repulsive about this, doesn't it strike you that way?

This does demonstrate though, if nothing else, that there is a tremendous interest in the body these days. And flipping through the ordinary family oriented magazines, I find this, not only through the occasional startling claims of housewives and office girls who have increased their dimensions, but by all the other body related material that is being offered. This magazine I have on my desk, for

example, this is what I find on just the first three pages. Open the cover and inside there is a double page spread featuring fantastic anti-perspirant, then a full page describing a weight reducing program, and then a full page exalting a series of skin creams. Go on and one will find material related to certain bodily functions which programs like this one never mention. A few pages further and there's a double page spread on a new book one of the big magazine publishers is putting out called *The Body*, and you can examine it for 10 days absolutely free.

Nowadays we are fascinated by the shape of the human body, by its contours, its feel, its softness, its firmness. This is a day in which the human body is being glorified.

But is it really? With all the interest in the body, it is not really being glorified? In fact, I think that a case could be made that it is being degraded as never before. Some of the emphases we have talked about are not really a glorification of the body at all, but an attempt to make it more an object, more fleshy, more animal even. Women's Lib has pointed this out. Women, we have been reminded, have become objects to be viewed and enjoyed in our sexist society. And I think that is right, don't you?

And you know, there is a strange death like element that runs through all of this. The heightened interest in the body is accompanied by a heightened interest in killing. Beautiful people are often associated with violence. Think of the Sharon Tate murder, think of the violence that throbs through these days, think of the women who lie murdered on the jackets of the paperbacks.

People are apparently Y<'ryconfus<' who t1 their bodies-about the hmyly. It is so close to them. They man:,\ as it clC', elops, they shuclcln as it deteriorates. They appreciate youth and vicrorancl shrinkhcforf' the blue'eins of age.

Joyce' Carol OatC's has a paragraph that catches the curiously mōrbid fascination people have \\with thC'ir bodies. It's in a short story called "Bodies," and shf' \\-rites ah011t skin. This is "hat she says:

"Skin is an organ of the body. It consists of many layers of celNo one could haYe i vented it. Cells absorb moisture and lose moisture: they pulsate in their o"n serrf't rhythm. in their o\\b private time. Im:iside, clastic. Each hum;in being has his own skin, umq̄uc to him. It is a mystery. Someday a drad \\Oman will wear the skin that belonged to a livincr woman and it is the same skin exactly. The it deco1;1posf's .... The skin is the lllOst impermeable barrier of tē body. It is ah:ays thirsty. Its thirst is insatlale. Human th1sts are satisfied from time to time but the t}urst of the human skin is ne\er satisfied so long as it lives."

It is true, isn't it, that right along \\with the continual emphasis on the body these clays, there is an increasin\_g interrist degrading it. It's not a timC' \\where the body is being glorified, though it is being emphasized. It is a time when people ran kill the bodies of the unborn without a second thought. It is a ti,ne \\when people wantonly indulge theiphysical lusts at great risks to their health and the health of their children. The use of alcohol and the use of cigarettes is growing in spite of the \\oy these drugs destroy the health of our hochees. There is gh:ttony, and just \_general carelessness

"ith rC'spert t<, our bodies these days. The same people ,,ho go on crash diets and use strange courses to change their shapes, a year later dis sipate the lllselves.

People do such strange things \\with their bodies. Why, it's not a time when the body is being glorified at all. It's being exploited, manipulated, playt.:dwith, but not respected and used properly.

Do you know \\why? People have lost the true knO\\dedge of their own bodies because they haYe lost the true knowledge of their souls. Many people don't even think we have souls. So they say, "Let's just enjoy material things, let's just enjoy our bodies .... " But thf'ir enjoyment turns to torture, and the beauty that they \\Orshipped becomes death-stained and ugly before their very eyes. The confus that exists about our bodies is a reflection of the fusion we have about our souls.

Our bodies are very dose. Somewhere along the line everyone must achieve a paper evaluation of his body ... how he is going to rare for it, and handle it, and use it ... all this. We ran make so many mistakes with our bodies that can lead to unnappineB. Physical, mental, and emotional health are all related.

Now maybe you thought that the Christian faith couldn't possibly have anything to say about this subject, because, well, when we think about Christianity we generally think about spiritu;ij things. Part of the gospel is the gospel that relates to our bodies. If you know the fullness of the Christian faith you will understand yourself better. You will understand your body, too. Here, let me show you what I mean by using a brief sentence from Corinthians 6 in the New Testament. This is what

it says: 'The body is meant for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.'

To be perfectly frank with you, if you are confused by all the strange and contradictory messages about the body that are coming across to you in the magazines, the newspapers, the movies, and from your friends. Yes, there is only one way you will be able to come to understand your own person, and that is to understand what the Bible says. When it says that the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. You see, the Christian faith is not a spiritual faith at all, in the sense that it doesn't stress the importance of our bodies and counsels us to think only of heaven and the hereafter. Not at all. The salvation that Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross to bring His people is a salvation that has profound meaning for their bodies, too. A Christian knows that his body is taken up in the great salvation of God.

Let me just mention three important teachings about the body that are very big in the Bible. We need each one of these if we are going to recover our sanity when it comes to our bodies.

Number one, when the Bible says the body is for the Lord, it announces that the human body is an instrument that has been created for a task, for a job, for a purpose. Take the beautiful sentence in Romans 12, for example, which says, "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. The body is considered the total package a person comes in. It is expressed in his external characteristics, but also in the mysterious inner work-

ings of his metabolism and all the wondrous processes that go on each day to make ordinary life possible. In addition, the body is viewed as something that includes thought, emotion, creative ability, everything that we experience within ourselves.

And this, God says, we must bring to Him, "hence He says that we should sacrifice it to His service. I Corinthians 6:13 explicitly announces that it is disobedience to God to use our bodies in the service of evil. And the context there is very explicit. Self-indulgence, immorality, unchastity, homosexuality, lust . . . all this is viewed as a use of the body which does not honor the high purpose for which it was created.

Your body belongs to God, to the Lord Jesus Christ . . . use it therefore for Him. Use it for the establishment of His kingdom. But the trouble is, millions who are exposed to all the confusion about our bodies that we are getting these days don't know anything about Jesus. They don't know that He died on Calvary's cross in order that sinful men who repent of their sin might be redeemed and given a great task to do. Maybe you don't know about Christ's great work of salvation.

Then, I'm telling you now. Jesus died so that those who believe on Him might be delivered from all the foolishness in this world. You can be saved, not just from hell some day, but right now. And that will mean that your body can be used for things that are pure and holy and noble. You can begin to care for it properly so that you will be able to serve God better. You won't get carried away by the contradictory, immoral, confusing messages that are being sent out these days about our bodies.

The body of those who belong to the Lord



ables him e\en to subject all things to himself." (4:21) Now, don't ask me to explain this, because I cannot. But maybe you have heard the old Apostles' Creed, and you remember that it has this phrase in "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh." Christians said that long ago, and they still do, because they believe the power of the Lord Jesus Christ is so great it can accomplish that miracle.

You see, the Bible announces that when Jesus died on Calvary and when He arose again, that was not just a private victory for Him but it was a victory that turns everything around. Now Christ has power that is without limits. Now, through this power, God is in the process of redeeming all creation, and ultimately Jesus is going to use it to subject all things to Himself. And He is going to use that same power to work this fantastic miracle. He will regather the bodies of His redeemed people, and they will be with Him throughout all eternity. That's incredible, isn't it?

But it's true. If you don't believe it, you might as well discredit the entire Bible, because this message recurs often. Romans 8 says, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you." (v. 11)

Maybe you are confused about your body. Maybe you are not taking proper care of yours, or you are making mistakes with it. You are proud of it, and you are embarrassed by it. And you are afraid of sickness and you are terrified by death.

Don't you think it might help to take the Bible seriously to take Jesus seriously? You

need the benefit of His sacrifice. You can't cross the line. You can't be a hypocrite. You can't be a pharisee. You can't be a legalist. You can't be a self-righteous person. . . your body, too. Don't believe all the lies you read. Believe in Jesus. Believe that your body is for the Lord and the Lord is for your body. Many of your problems will vanish.

#### PRAYER

*We are really grateful, Lord, that the message of the gospel includes a message of redemption that touches our bodies. We often think that religion is so very spiritual. We forget that the God who saves us is the one who has created all things, our bodies, too.*

*Forgive us for all the confusion we have with respect to our bodies and with respect to the use of them. We should use them and care for them. Forgive us for being overly impressed with sickness, aging, and death. Help us feel the inner renewal of our persons with each passing year. And quicken us with great hope as we believe we will be glorified by the power of Jesus after we die.*

*Use this message as a powerful incentive for those who have not yet confessed their sins. May they be so amazed at the fullness of salvation, that they will now turn to Jesus in confession and repentance. In the power of the cross we pray, Amen.*

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3SR	Shepparton	8.00 p.m.
3UL	Warragul	7.00 p.m.
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4KQ	Brisbane	8.30 p.m.
4WK	Warwick	8.00 p.m.
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